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RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0724  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4276  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7815  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5375  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1178  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001131

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DEPT FOR P, EAP/MLS AND IO  
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/28/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: CHINESE NOT ASKING MUCH OF BURMA

REF: A. USUN 1054  
[1](#)B. SINGAPORE 2086

Classified By: CDA Shari Villarosa for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: China's Ambassador to Burma expressed satisfaction that the Than Shwe regime was making political progress, and urged the U.S. to be more patient and less critical. He did not offer any specific details on the November 14-16 visit of Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Burma, whom he described as China's "Special Envoy." Charge laid out the many recent contradictions we had observed that made us skeptical that Than Shwe would engage in a genuine dialogue and make the necessary compromises to achieve national reconciliation. The Ambassador appeared willing to accept far less of the regime than we would. However, he still expects some change, which gives us the opportunity to lay out our expectations, so that they continue to push for more from the Burmese regime than they might otherwise accept. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge hosted the Chinese Ambassador and his Deputy for dinner November 17. She inquired about the topics discussed during the recently concluded visit of Wang Yi to Burma. The Ambassador said he received assurances that the regime's so-called roadmap to democracy was on track, which he considered positive news. The Charge questioned how it would bring stability, if it was not made more inclusive by bringing in the pro-democracy supporters and ethnic minorities. The Ambassador responded that the ethnic minorities had participated in the National Convention and that the new Minister for Relations had met Aung San Suu Kyi twice (now three times). Charge countered that they had been hand-picked by the regime, that those who had participated had complained to us that their proposals never were discussed, and that those ethnic leaders who questioned the process were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms, specifically naming Shan leader Hkun Htun Oo.

[1](#)3. (C) Charge criticized the campaign ginned up by the regime to divide the ethnic minorities from the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). The Ambassador accepted at face value the regime's claims that she tried to make herself the representative of the ethnics. The Charge explained that she read the statement as an interest in ensuring the inclusion of the ethnic minorities in any dialogue. Any

misunderstandings were a result of the regime's refusal to let ASSK speak directly for herself, the Charge continued. She cited the case of Benizir Bhutto in Pakistan, being allowed to speak directly, even though she was under house arrest. As long as ASSK could only speak through Gambari, Aung Kyi and the NLD uncles, there would be misunderstandings. Only when she can speak for herself will she be able to quickly correct any misunderstandings.

14. (C) The Ambassador then tried to defend the current situation in Burma by claiming that opening up the roadmap now, would drag out the process. He cited as a success that the regime scheduled its final session of the National Convention in July during the rainy season, rather than waiting until now for the onset of the dry season. Charge said that most pro-democracy activists have told us they can support most of what was discussed, but a few items require wider discussion to be more broadly acceptable. She added that the regime could bring more people into the process by permitting genuine debate of the pros and cons, plus it would help educate the people to make an informed choice in the referendum planned for 2008.

15. (C) Charge expressed doubts that a real dialogue or any change was likely as long as Than Shwe was in charge. While there might be lower level officials who might be interested in reform, they are afraid of Than Shwe, she added. The Ambassador recommended that the United States be more conscious of the Asian concern for face and be less critical. Charge replied that for that reason we had hoped that the Chinese and ASEANs would urge change on the regime. She then laid out the many contradictions we had observed belying indications of a genuine political dialogue: the ginning up

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of statements against ASSK by the ethnic minorities, the continuing arrests, the possibility of criminal charges being brought against peaceful protestors, the restrictions on Gambari's and Pinheiro's meetings.

16. (C) The Ambassador repeated his assertions that political change would come, and insisted that Burma did not threaten regional stability. Charge challenged the latter pointing out the highest rates of HIV/AIDs infection in China were along its border with Burma and most of the heroin and methamphetamines in China came from Burma. She acknowledged that the Thais also tried to claim publicly that Burma was not a regional problem, but they complain about the Burmese migrants and drugs coming into Thailand. These statements that Burma does not threaten regional stability might convince other countries who did not know the true facts, but they would not work with the United States.

17. (C) Comment: We actually enjoyed a very friendly dinner despite the clear differences of opinion. Most of the other Ambassadors complain that they can never get a meeting with him, but he has always been very responsive to our requests. It seems clear that the Chinese can accept a political solution in Burma far short of what we want to see. They seem to think that speeding up current roadmap would suffice. So we must keep reminding the Chinese that we will require more. Their priority is stability in Burma--a managed transition--but they also realize than some sort of U.S. acceptance will be required for long-term political and economic stability in Burma. It appears clear from the recent ASEAN meetings that the Chinese do not really want ASEAN out front dealing with the regime, but we do not believe they are necessarily doing the bidding of the regime as UNSYG Ban fears (reftels). They are advancing the interests of China by making Burma beholden to them, and only them. But the Chinese also need us, which gives us leverage to demand more than what the Chinese might otherwise accept in Burma.  
VILLAROSA